

# HOPE

JOURNAL

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CREATIVITY MATTERS AT CIA | TERRIBLE AND BEAUTIFUL: STEWARD AND JIMÉNEZ | WASHING THE BLUES AWAY: UNFIXED | ARTFACE: DEXTER DAVIS

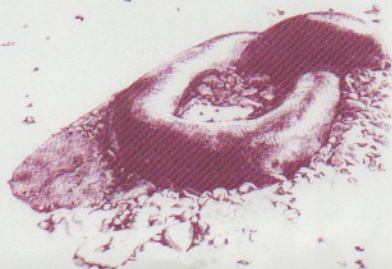




## ZYGOTE PRESS

Anila Rubiku | Durres, Albania

By Deidre McPherson



UNCHAIN MY HEART



I CAN HARDLY SPEAK

At Zygote Press, artist Anila Rubiku practiced a medium new to her, intaglio printmaking. Her works, which deal with the metaphorical implications of chains in different cultures, will be on view at Zygote through May 24.

## Connections, Bonds, and Bondage: Chains of Meaning

Anila Rubiku is fascinated with the strong imagery and many symbolic meanings of chains. Her upcoming exhibition at Zygote Press, *Tain't Nobody's Business*, is a series of work depicting chains as a metaphor for the pain and sorrow that can be stirred up by love. "There are so many songs about chains and mostly all of the blues songs talk about a past pain or love or something they cannot have."

The title is derived from the 1920s blues standard popularized by Bessie Smith, in which the Empress of the Blues embraces her situation, even if that means staying in an abusive relationship:

*"I'd rather my man would hit me  
Than to jump up right and quit me  
Tain't nobody's business if I do  
I swear I won't call no copper  
If I'm beat up by my poppa  
Tain't nobody's business if I do"*

In 2013, Rubiku brought attention to the issue of domestic violence in her native Albania, and with that project she questioned how can a woman end up in prison for a man. She concluded that "...it was not for the man, it was for love that she ended up there. Everything the human does is for love. So I did a lot of research on that."

Rubiku's community work during her residency has entailed leading art projects at the Thomas Jefferson International Newcomers

Academy, a school for children who come to Cleveland from other countries. She showed students a photo of a chain and asked them to draw one and write what it is in their language. Their responses varied. "A Middle Eastern boy said, it reminded him of boats because he lives near water. One guy from the Congo said it reminded him of slavery because he comes from a colonized nation. It's connected to a political and social part of history. Nepalese children at the school don't know what a chain is. They don't have it as part of their culture."

With a three-month residency in which to create new work in printmaking—a medium that's new to her—Rubiku doesn't have much free time on her hands. She shared, "I've thrown one month of work into the garbage because I'm not easily satisfied. It takes time to learn." For the remainder of her residency, she plans to explore Cleveland, including visiting the list of restaurants around town that she's aching to experience. ■

### ARTIST PRESENTATION AT ZYGOTE PRESS:

10 AM – NOON APRIL 23

ANILA RUBIKU EXHIBITION | MAY 6-24

OPENING RECEPTION 6 – 8 PM, MAY 6

CREATIVE MORNINGS PRESENTATION | MAY 20